# **Review Memo**

**Manuscript ID: ESR-2024-313**  
**Title: “Class-based Network Segregation, Economic Inequality, and Redistributive Preferences across Societies”**

**Introduction and Theory**

* The introduction was revised to better situate the contribution of the paper in relation to existing literature, particularly distinguishing it from Lindh and Andersson (2024). While that study examined class composition of networks and egalitarian attitudes in connection to welfare state institutions, this paper highlights network homogeneity as a distinct concept and emphasizes realized inequality (post-tax and transfer Gini) as the macro-level context in which political attitudes are formed. This clarification strengthens the originality and added value of the manuscript.
* The theoretical framework was expanded to articulate more clearly the conditional nature of Hypothesis 1. The revised version specifies that the relationship between network homogeneity and redistributive preferences depends on respondents’ own social class, moving beyond the earlier, more symmetrical formulation.
* The mechanisms linking network homogeneity to attitudes are further explained in more detail. For the service class, homogeneous networks reduce exposure to other groups, leading to less empathy and solidarity toward those in need and thus weaker support for redistribution. For the working class, homogeneous networks reinforce shared experiences of marginalization and strengthen redistributive preferences, while cross-class contact may normalize inequalities and dampen redistributive demand. This resolves earlier ambiguities regarding how solidarity and awareness mechanisms operate at both ends of the class structure.
* Better conceptual precision was introduced. Social class is now defined explicitly as a structural position rooted in labor relations and occupations. The term “service class” is consistently used instead of “upper class” to avoid conflating these categories. Moreover, the revised theory distinguishes clearly between network homogeneity, understood as a measure of *segregation* and closure, and class profiles, which capture the number of direct ties to specific other classes.

**Methods**

* In response to Reviewer 2’s concern that the descriptive section lacked sufficient motivation and clarity, the methods section was revised to explicitly state the purpose of the descriptive analyses. The revised version now explains that the descriptive part serves to illustrate patterns of network homogeneity across classes and countries, and to provide context for interpreting the multilevel regression results.
* The role of **Figure 4** was clarified. The text now specifies that this figure is intended to visually represent the magnitude and substantive significance of the interaction between class and network homogeneity, helping to address the “so-what” question raised by Reviewer 1. The figure illustrates how redistributive preferences differ across class positions depending on the degree of homogeneity, thereby making the findings more tangible.
* Table and figure titles were corrected and clarified. For example, the heading of Table 2 now explicitly states the dependent variable, responding directly to Reviewer 2’s request.
* To improve transparency, the method section now explains more clearly how measures were constructed. This includes a clarification of how the homogeneity index was calculated (as the share of same-class ties relative to total network ties), and how it differs conceptually from the network class profiles (absolute number of ties to specific classes).
* Additional robustness checks were incorporated to strengthen the main analysis. Specifically, analyses were re-run using both the three-class and six-class versions of the EGP scheme (in response to Reviewer 1 and Reviewer 3), with results presented in the supplementary materials (Tables S4 and S5). These analyses confirmed that the observed patterns of network segregation and its interaction with class hold under both classification schemes.
* Concerns about possible misclassification of “isolates” were addressed. Following Reviewer 3’s point, the methods section now specifies that respondents who reported no contacts in the position generator (about 5% of the sample) were excluded from the analysis. This ensures that the measure of homogeneity captures segregation within active networks and is not confounded by cases of true social isolation.
* The statistical control strategy was simplified. In response to Reviewer 1’s concern about post-treatment bias and model complexity, only a minimal set of necessary controls was retained in the main models. Additional sociodemographic and macro-level variables were shifted to robustness checks in the supplementary analyses. This change increases parsimony while ensuring that results are not driven by confounders.
* To address Reviewer 1’s concern about limited statistical power with only 31 countries, I conducted a series of simulation-based power analyses. The simulations estimated the ability to detect both direct effects of income inequality and the key cross-level interaction between class, network homogeneity, and economic inequality. Three effect sizes were tested across varying numbers of clusters, ranging from 50 to 600, with each scenario repeated 500 times. Additional simulations assessed the three-way interaction, including both income inequality and welfare state size as moderators. These findings are presented in Figures S1 and S2 and are discussed explicitly in the limitations section, where I stress that non-significant results should be interpreted cautiously in light of these power constraints.
* Finally, the revised methods section highlights that network size is included as a control in all models. This was emphasized to reassure reviewers that results are not driven by sparse networks, but reflect genuine variation in the concentration of ties.

**Results**

* The results for Hypothesis 1 show that the association between network homogeneity and redistributive preferences is conditional on respondents’ social class. In the service class, higher levels of homogeneity are associated with lower support for redistribution, consistent with the argument that closed networks reduce empathy and solidarity toward lower classes. In the working class, in contrast, higher homogeneity is linked to stronger support for redistribution, reflecting reinforced marginalization and shared identity. These findings support the segregation hypothesis and demonstrate that homogeneity functions differently at both ends of the class structure.
* The results for Hypothesis 2 indicate that income inequality moderates the interaction between class and network homogeneity. Higher levels of inequality tend to reduce the differences between classes in redistributive preferences. When welfare state size is introduced as an additional moderator, the interaction with inequality becomes weaker or non-significant. This outcome could be explained by the high correlation between the two measures and the limited number of countries available. These findings were interpreted with caution, in line with the reviewers’ concerns and the power analysis results.
* In the appendix, Table A1 presents the full model specification that includes both respondent’s class and network homogeneity jointly, ensuring transparency in model reporting. The appendix also contains robustness checks where additional individual-level controls such as income, education, and labor market status were included. These analyses show that the main findings remain stable and are not driven by alternative specifications.
* In the supplementary materials, Tables S1–S3 expand the models by incorporating network class profiles and further macro-level controls, including GDP per capita, welfare state indicators, corruption, democracy, migration share, unemployment, and union density. These robustness checks confirm that the central associations hold under broader specifications.
* The supplementary materials also provide results using an alternative classification of social class. Tables S4–S5 re-estimate the models with a six-category EGP scheme instead of the three-category version. The consistency of the findings across both classification schemes strengthens the reliability of the results.
* Finally, Figures S1–S2 in the supplementary materials report the results of the simulation-based power analyses. These simulations show that the available 31 country clusters provide limited power to detect the hypothesized cross-level interactions. Larger numbers of clusters would be needed to reach conventional power levels. This limitation is explicitly acknowledged in the discussion, where the results are interpreted cautiously and framed as indicative rather than definitive.

**Conclusions**

* The discussion was expanded to address the magnitude and substantive significance of the results, responding directly to Reviewer 1’s request for more emphasis on the “so-what” question. The revised text highlights that the differences shown in Figure 4 represent meaningful shifts in redistributive preferences across classes depending on network segregation, situating these findings in the broader literature on class-based inequality and political attitudes.
* The conclusion now emphasizes more clearly that the effects of network homogeneity are conditional on class position, resolving ambiguities noted by Reviewer 2. For the working class, homogeneous networks reinforce marginalization and strengthen redistributive preferences; for the service class, homogeneous networks reduce solidarity and lower redistributive support. This conditional framing ensures consistency between theory, results, and conclusions.
* Reviewer 2’s concerns about some interpretations overstating the “solidarity” effect were addressed by refining the language of the conclusion. The revised version specifies that cross-class ties foster solidarity primarily among service-class individuals, while for the working class, cross-class ties may weaken redistributive support. This prevents misinterpretation and aligns the conclusions with the empirical findings.
* The discussion was broadened to situate the study within larger debates on social cohesion. The revised text now considers implications beyond redistribution, including potential effects of network segregation on social trust, participation in voluntary associations, and electoral engagement. By doing so, the conclusion makes clear that the study contributes not only to research on redistributive preferences but also to wider sociological discussions about class-based segregation and cohesion.
* Finally, the limitations section was strengthened in light of Reviewer 1’s concerns about statistical power and cross-national inference. The revised version explicitly acknowledges the restricted number of country clusters, the challenges of identifying causal mechanisms with observational data, and the high correlation between inequality and welfare state measures. At the same time, it underscores that the results consistently point to systematic patterns that are theoretically meaningful, even if statistical significance is limited in some specifications.

**Added references**

Doucette, J. S. (2024). What Can We Learn about the Effects of Democracy Using Cross-National Data? American Political Science Review, 1–10.

Hertel, F. R., & Groh-Samberg, O. (2019). The Relation between Inequality and Intergenerational Class Mobility in 39 Countries. *American Sociological Review*, *84*(6), 1099–1133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122419885094>

Palme, J. (2006). Welfare states and inequality: Institutional designs and distributive outcome. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, *24*, 387–403.

Parkin, F. (1974). Strategies of Social Closure in Class Formation. In *The Social Analysis of Class Structure* (Routledge).

Wiesner, T. (2025). Rising inequality: Is the public response really lacking? A comparative longitudinal analysis of perceived inequality and evaluative attitudes. Socio-Economic Review, mwaf017. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwaf017>

# **Response to Reviewers**

## **Editors**

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| **ID** | **Comment** | **Response** |
| E1.1 | Issue of (too) many country-level variables in the same model; discussion of alternative interpretation regarding the Gini coefficient effects (also in relation to welfare state size, see R2); issue of income as control variable and its potential posttreatment bias | I addressed this comment through an alternative empirical strategy. Additionally, I included the analyses with additional macro-level variables in the Supplementary Materials. This allowed me to maintain greater parsimony in modeling the associations. At the micro level, I followed a similar approach, retaining a minimal set of controls and treating the additional variables as potential confounders (See Table A1) in the relationship between my main predictors—social network characteristics and social class—and the dependent variable, redistributive preferences. |
| E1.2 | Clearer and more coherent explanation of the theoretical mechanism for the homogeneity of social network for both upper and lower classes; provide an analysis which assesses the extent to which homogeneity level of network exerts an effect that is additional to the effects of own social class and of the social class of network ties (including both worker and service class ties): revise conclusion section given new findings; define social class | I paid particular attention to this comment in the theory section. Specifically, I revised the theoretical elaboration to more clearly outline the predictions for both ends of the class structure and to clarify that Hypothesis 1 is conditional in nature, involving an interaction between social class and class-based network homogeneity.  Regarding the extent to which network homogeneity has a different or additional effect compared to network class profiles, I would highlight two key points. First, homogeneity captures an attribute of the entire network, specifically the degree of segregation an individual experiences in relation to their own class. It does not directly reflect ties to specific other classes, as network class profiles do. These represent two distinct ways of understanding how individuals experience the class structure through their social networks: homogeneity indicates the absence of cross-class (i.e., cross-cutting) ties, while class profiles identify connections to particular social classes where ego’s position does not play a role.  Second, one could argue that network segregation—measured through homogeneity—reflects the concentration of ties within one's own class and is, in that sense, derived from class profiles. This is an important conceptual distinction because, in my view, including both class homogeneity and class profiles in the same model may introduce problems in identifying a clear independent association, given that a part of the variance of the class-based network homogeneity is based on the in-group ties (homogeneity share) and the other part on the out-group ties (non-homogeneous share). In other words, this implies the degree of network closure for each social class, in comparison to the single network composition based on individual class-based network profiles. |
| E1.3 | A better explanation of the paper added value compared to the contribution of Lindh and Andersson's 2024 ESR | I also clarified in both the introduction and theoretical framework that the objective of this study is to examine post-tax and transfer income inequality—not the moderating role of welfare state institutions. At the same time, I implemented a more appropriate empirical strategy to better illustrate the role of economic inequality as the distributional context in which both political debates and political attitudes are shaped. |
| E1.4 | consider comment on isolated vs homogeneous network; | Regarding the comment about “hermits” (individuals without any reported contacts), I have clarified that this group is not included in the analytical sample. The main reason for this exclusion is that one of the criteria for determining whether a person has a homogeneous network is that they must report at least one network tie and have an identifiable individual class position. |
| E1.5 | provide additional analysis for non-collapsed EGP class categories | The collapsed three-category class scheme can indeed be expanded into six classes. Therefore, I re-estimated the models using the six-class version for both Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. The results of these analyses are reported in the Supplementary Materials (see Table S4 and Table S5). |

## **Reviewer 1**

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| **ID** | **Comment** | **Response** |
| R1.1 | I do, however, have one (potentially fundamental) concern. The main novelty of the paper is to assess how inequality at the countrylevel shapes the interaction between class-based network segregation and social class. However, there are only 31 countries. The analyses estimate the independent “effects”, at the macro-level, of economic inequality, economic development (GDP) and welfare state type simultaneously, while also estimating the interaction effect between economic inequality and the individual-level interaction between network segregation and class. This is demanding a whole lot from the data, and I’m not sure I would trust the estimates coming out of such a model (even estimating four coefficients with 31 units without an interaction term is probably too demanding). Particularly in light of recent findings about power issues when using country level data, see Doucette 2024. While Doucette’s article is from a different field, I think it could be useful for the authors to engage with this fundamental criticism and do some power analyses to show us how many units their analysis would need to reliably discover interaction effects of different magnitudes. | Although the aim of the paper is not the direct or main “effect” (indeed is the association) of income inequality, but its role as a moderator of a micro-level relationship, I think this is a fair point when it comes to multilevel models with few clusters, in this case, countries. For this reason, I have considered the point of running a set of power analyses under a different set of circumstances. These are described as follows:   1. Simulation of three effect sizes: *Small* effect (0.05 SD), *Observed* effect (0.09 SD), *Large* effect (0.2 SD) for different numbers of clusters (Nj = {50,100,150,200,240,300,400,500,600}). Each simulation is based on 500 repetitions. 2. Simulation of the main cross-level interaction for a set of different clusters (Nj = {50 to 400}). Each simulation is based on 500 repetitions.   Regarding the mixed results regarding the main cross-level association of the Gini index and economic inequality, the results can be summarized as follows.  First, I have included this in the last section of the manuscript as part of the limitations of the study. Previous studies pointed out that country effects are difficult to estimate under a low number of clusters (e.g., below 30). In this regard, the multilevel regressions are estimated by employing Restricted Maximum Likelihood (REML), which provides more reliable standard errors when the number of countries is low. Nevertheless, it does not address the emerging problem of the low number of clusters, in this case, countries.  Second, following the reviewer’s recommendation, I ran a power analysis (see Figure S1). For this purpose, I estimated a Monte-Carlo simulation for the direct effect of income inequality on redistributive preferences measured by the Gini Index at the country level for 50 to 600 hypothetical numbers of clusters. In sum, the simulations' results suggest that above 550 clusters are necessary to find a substantive direct effect of income inequality. Nevertheless, I consider this a hypothetical exercise, as it represents an unrealistic assumption when the higher-level entities are countries.  There are two relevant results regarding the cross-level interaction between income inequality and the interaction between individual social class and class-based homogeneity (*mitigation hypothesis*).  First, when the interaction of the size of the welfare state is included as a cross-level interaction in the model, the cross-level interaction of income inequality is affected in terms of effect size and statistical significance (see Table S3). Nevertheless, I consider this to entail a critical problem related to the number of countries in the sample. The main issue with this is that the models include the random slopes of social class and network homogeneity jointly with the cross-level interactions of income inequality and size of the welfare state. Therefore, it is not surprising to find a non-statistically significant coefficient for the cross-level interaction of income inequality. This can be attributed to the lack of statistical power in a sample of 31 clusters (countries), but also given the correlation between the size of the welfare state and the Gini index (*r* = .84).  Following the spirit of the original comment regarding the number of countries in the study and to provide some evidence to overcome this problem, I ran simulations to estimate the significance levels of the interaction effects following a similar strategy as the one described above (see Figure S2). According to this, I conducted a power analysis for the *first* cross-level interaction (Class × Homogeneity × Gini) while the *second* cross-level interaction is included (Class × Homogeneity × Welfare State Size).  At first noticing, the simulation-based power analysis shows that with 50 hypothetical countries, the statistical power to detect the observed three-way interaction effects is low: below 60% for both the Working and Intermediate Class interactions (see Figure S2). In my view, this restricts the capacity of drawing strong conclusions at first glance. I therefore emphasize effect size patterns and interpret findings with caution, recognizing that non-significant results may reflect limited statistical power rather than the absence of meaningful effects.  The simulations extend up to 400 country-clusters to illustrate the asymptotic behavior of power. Like my observation on the coefficient of the main effect of income inequality, the number of hypothetical countries far exceeds the total number of sovereign states in the globe. With only around 195 recognized countries globally—and far fewer with harmonized and comparable survey data—I treat any estimates beyond 100–200 clusters as purely illustrative. These high-cluster scenarios serve only as a theoretical reference and are not considered practically attainable benchmarks for empirical research. |
| R1.2 | Another but related issue is that of how to interpret the estimates. Income inequality/the gini coefficient is correlated with so many other things at the country-level that it is hard if not impossible to know whether it’s indeed the income inequality that is doing the work here, or rather any other variable correlated with income inequality. This is not necessarily a reason not to publish the paper, if this is the best we can do, but I do think it deserves more attention than it is currently receiving. The author acknowledges this problem very briefly towards the end, but I think a more comprehensive discussion would be worthwhile: What other relevant confounders may exist at the country-level? What alternative study designs may cast more light on this phenomenon in future studied (beyond merely saying “longitudinal studies”)? What can we as researchers do to gain more insight into the plausibility of the author’s main claim? | In response to this comment, I conducted a set of analyses by incorporating additional country-level control variables into the regression models (see Table S2). While the primary focus of the study is on income inequality as a socioeconomic contextual moderator, I also control for national prosperity (measured by GDP per capita) and the size of the welfare state. To broaden the scope in line with existing literature, I included contextual factors from three additional domains: politico-institutional (PI), sociocultural (SC), and labor market-industry (LMI) (Lindh & McCall, 2020)  In the politico-institutional domain, I added the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2025) and the Polyarchy Index (Coppedge et al., 2025) to account for country-level variation in corruption and democratic quality.  In the sociocultural domain, I included the share of foreign-born residents as a percentage of the total population (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2024). In the labor market-industry domain, I included both the national Unemployment rate and Trade union density rate (International Labour Organization, 2020)  Importantly, these extended models confirm the robustness of the main findings: controlling for politico-institutional, sociocultural, and labor market-industry factors does not alter the central result. The Gini Index continues to moderate the interaction between individual class position and class-based network segregation on redistributive preferences, consistent with the main estimations. |
| R1.3 | The analyses include controls for socioeconomic characteristics such as income, education, and labor market status (see p. 8). Especially income seems to me to be a source of post-treatment bias, as income follows from class position and in turn affects redistributive preferences. Income is one of the mechanisms through which class may affect such preferences, and so controlling for it may introduce bias in the class coefficient (these kinds of issues have been discussed in several contributions on the link between class and attitudes or party choice). I think it may be worthwhile for the author to justify the inclusion of the controls better in terms of a causal model. Which variables are confounders and which ones are mediators? | I agree that this needs further attention in the text. As a result, I have explained in more detail the rationale behind the included controls in the regression analysis. I also agree with the comment that socioeconomic factors are endogenous to class positions. Therefore, I decided to maintain a simplified version of the model specification in Table 1, and I excluded them from the main analysis. Finally, I also incorporated the additional controls in the robustness analyses (see Table A1). |
| R1.4 | I would have liked to see more on magnitude and real-world significance of the interaction effect. This is depicted very nicely in Figure 4, but a bit more on the “so-what question” would be good. The findings shown in this figure are the core findings of the whole article, so it would deserve more discussion in the text. What does it tell us about sociological and political phenomena? What’s the real-world significance of the differences shown in the different panels? | Indeed, the findings can be linked to other research domains. For this, I have included in conclusion my thoughts on the theorization of the implications of my results for other aspects. A first vein of possible research is to what extent class-based segregation can be associated with other political attitudes and behavior. In this regard, I have included some expectations regarding the *direct* association of segregation jointly with the class-specific *conditional* association with other possible outcomes. How do segregated networks have implications on other domains, such as social trust, participation in voluntary associations, or electoral participation? In the literature on social cohesion, the research on the class-trust link has suggested that more advantaged classes tend to trust more in strangers, be more engaged in social activities, and have a higher propensity to participate in elections. In this regard, how is network segregation associated with the different cohesive attitudes and behavior? To what extent can being segregated affect social trust? Also, does segregation in working or service class social environments boost or diminish social cohesion? |

## **Reviewer 2**

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| **ID** | **Comment** | **Response** |
| R2.1 | Previous research argues that the social class of network members matters for an individual´s attitudes for various reasons (e.g., Paskov and Weisstanner 2022). In relation to this literature, the current paper adds a new micro-level theoretical framework focusing on the homogeneity of networks rather than the content or characteristics of network members. Although this is theoretically appealing, I think this theory is underdeveloped and has problems in making coherent predictions.  At first glance, the model focusing on network homogeneity appears to be parsimonious and symmetric across classes, but it quickly becomes clear that this is not the case. I will first cite from the abstract. “Homogeneous class-based networks foster segregated lifeworlds, deepening the divide between social classes and diminishing awareness of others' living conditions and perspectives. Specifically, homogeneous upper-class networks may reduce empathy and solidarity toward those in need, lowering support for redistribution. In contrast, homogeneous working-class networks amplify marginalization and strengthen the demand for redistribution.” Two of the mentioned mechanisms, empathy and solidarity, appear to be specific to the upper-class, while the function networks for empathy and solidarity of the working class is less clear. In contrast, the awareness mechanism seems to apply to all social classes. However, it is not evident why the working class's awareness of the living conditions of the upper class (which arises from a less homogeneous network) should lead to reduced support for redistribution. To me, it seems like awareness of the living conditions of the upper classes would likely increase the demand for redistribution. | Thank you for this comment. Indeed, the theorization presented in the submitted manuscript required a more detailed explanation of the relationship between network homogeneity and redistributive preferences, particularly concerning the proposed conditional nature of this association.  The theoretical framework begins with the general premise that both working- and service-class individuals are shaped by socially distant and segregated lifeworlds. However, I acknowledge that the initial argument did not clearly articulate why these two class positions would respond differently to homogeneous social networks.To address this, I have clarified the first research question related to the segregation hypothesis to make the individual-level theorization more explicit. For members of the service class, class homogeneity increases social distance from the middle and working classes. This segregation restricts opportunities for empathy and solidarity, as individuals are less likely to be exposed to the living conditions and perspectives of those from different social backgrounds.  In contrast, when working-class individuals maintain frequent contact with middle- or upper-class others—particularly in mixed workplace or social environments—such interactions may normalize existing inequalities, reduce perceptions of class conflict, and foster aspirational identification with higher-status groups rather than oppositional attitudes. As a result, cross-class contact may diminish support for redistribution among the working class, while high homogeneity may reinforce a shared identity rooted in marginalization, thus strengthening redistributive preferences. I hope with these changes in the theory section; the previous issue has been solved and clarified. |
| R2.2 | In the main paper, the arguments provided in the abstract are not developed further. Instead, we are given the following theoretical motivation for the micro-level hypothesis: “I hypothesize that the association between network homogeneity and redistributive preferences is conditional on social class because homogeneous social networks should reinforce attitude similarity.” My interpretation of this statement is that it is the similarity (homogeneity) as such that brings the effects, rather than the characteristics of ties or the content of the relation. Here, the argument seems to be that in-group ties reinforce opinions of typical class positions. This particular view is however not fully tested in the paper. | This comment brings a relevant point to the discussion. The position generator was classified into three occupational groups: low, intermediate, and high. These are the single-class network profiles, which have been proven to be associated with political attitudes beyond the individual class position. In this paper, I aimed to observe to what extent the share of ties to similar class ties is associated with redistributive preferences, particularly how the share of similarity affects the working, intermediate, and service classes differently. In other words, to what extent does the proportion of similar ties have a different association for the three social classes? In this sense, according to my theorization, being connected to certain classes (single class-profile approach) is different from being connected mainly to similar-class ties in terms of the *share* and not in number. Therefore, it refers to the degree of social distance of one person to different classes than their own. Also, as I show in the paper, it is not directly associated with redistributive preferences, but the relationship is conditional on the individual class position (H1: segregation hypothesis). Therefore, when I refer to class-based network segregation, I am not referring to the pure number of in-group ties, but their relative representation in the total number of occupations known in the personal network. |
| R2.3 | Methodologically, the regression models do not convince me that there is such a specific effect of homogeneity that is different from – or on top of – the coefficients of the class composition of the network. Although models include a control variable measuring network size, there is no control for the class position of ties. This means that the specific effect of a homogenous network is different in terms of class composition for the working class and the service class. A homogenous network for workers means that contacts are workers while a homogenous network for the service class implies contacts with CEOs and lawyers. | This is a very insightful comment. Regarding this, I argue that the pure class-based ties or class profiles are substantially different from the class-based network homogeneity measure.  Instead of considering the pure number of ties to certain classes, what I aim to measure is the share of same or similar class ties, as the relative number of in-group ties to the total number of ties. It can also be interpreted as a measure of the concentration of same-class network ties.  This implies that the number of ties for each class is included in the network homogeneity measure as the degree of segregation. At the same time, as my first hypothesis aims to observe to what extent segregation in both ends of the class structure is associated with redistributive preferences, the interaction of network homogeneity with individual class position is more aligned with my theorization  Therefore, H1 is, by definition, an interaction between the degree of segregation (the share of similar class ties according to ego’s class position) and the individual class position. As follows, regardless of the number of occupations known, I see that having similar classes for the working and services classes strengthens their respective average redistributive preferences. |
| R2.4 | To show a significant interaction between own class and homogeneity is hence not enough since it just reflects that the homogeneity variable means different things depending on ego's class position (given the construction of the homogeneity variable). To convince the reader that the interaction effect indeed is about homogeneity rather than class composition of the network, one way could be to run a full interaction model including own social class and the social class of network ties (including both worker and service class ties). A substantially different effect of homogenous ties i.e., a more important effect of worker ties for workers and a more important effect of service class ties for those in service class occupations would strengthen the case that homogeneity of ties is what matters. | To address this comment, I proceeded guided by the following reasoning:   1. Instead of homogeneity of the network as the share of similar network ties, I used the number of network ties for each class, referred to as network class-profiles (low, intermediate, high). 2. I included the three network class profiles in the same models as individual class positions. 3. I interacted with the individual class positions with each network tie in the same model.   First, in line with previous evidence, the class profiles are associated with redistributive preferences (see Table S1). For instance, a higher number of ties to the working class is associated with higher redistributive preferences. Also, intermediate class ties show a positive but not statistically significant association with redistributive preferences. Finally, a higher number of ties to the higher class is associated with lower redistributive preferences.  Regarding the interaction between individual class position and network class profile, we observe contrasting results. The results of the interaction between the individual class position with the class profiles lead to rather different results. In the case of the intermediate class, having more contacts with the intermediate class positions does not change redistributive preferences. Similar to the working class, having more contacts with the working class does not affect redistributive preferences.  In my view, this indicates the difference of the class-based homogeneity measure as it does not work on the number, but the share of contacts of the same class. I agree that the rationale behind the class profiles interacting with the individual class position follows a similar argumentation in terms of having ties to a similar class.  However, I would argue that a single measure that represents the share instead of the absolute number is more parsimonious than including three interaction terms at the same time. Additionally, as I mentioned in the theory section, experiencing segregation could also be interpreted as a degree of class closure in both ends of the class structure, which may have different consequences for economic preferences expressed in support for redistribution. |
| R2.5 | Finally, I do not think that the following conclusion is supported by the current analysis: “These results support the idea that low crossclass embeddedness can reduce collective solidarity as they limit awareness about the living conditions of other classes.” Results however suggest that a low cross-class embeddedness increases “solidarity” for the working class.  One interpretation is that authors mean that cross-class embeddedness increases solidarity only for the higher classes, but then it should either be specified that this theoretical model only applies to the service class, or discuss why cross-class interaction reduces solidarity (?) for the working class, which appears to be the result of the models.  In summary, the micro-level theory focusing on homogeneous networks is not consistently presented throughout the paper, leading the author to draw ambiguous conclusions. | This is a point that requires further clarification, particularly in the theoretical model. Accordingly, I have specified that class-network homogeneity is conditional on an individual's class position. In the section on “Network Segregation and Redistributive Preferences,” I clarify that homogeneity within the working and service classes is expected to have distinct implications for redistributive preferences.  I argue that, at both ends of the class structure, homogeneity is associated with stronger class-based attitudes. Specifically, working-class individuals embedded in homogeneous working-class networks are more likely to support redistribution than those with less homogeneity in their networks. In contrast, service-class individuals with homogeneous service-class networks tend to be less supportive of redistribution than their counterparts with more heterogeneous networks.  In this context, homogeneity within the service class is linked to lower levels of out-group solidarity. Greater cross-class contact may foster empathy toward those facing hardship and, in turn, strengthen solidarity, ultimately leading to increased support for redistribution.  Conversely, homogeneity within the working class may be associated with stronger demands for redistribution. This could stem from heightened marginalization, which could also reinforce a shared class identity—whereas a sense of commonality may blur as cross-class ties extend to the intermediate and service classes. |
| R2.6 | Social class is not defined in the paper which makes it a bit unclear if social relations are a part of class or not. | This point has been further clarified by describing how social class is conceptualized in the theory, by mentioning that they are understood as a structural position derived from labor relations within the labor market and production units, typically represented by occupations. |
| R2.7 | The term upper class is used synonymously with service class. This is a bit problematic since the upper class is often used for a smaller group whereas the service class refers to (in this case) 42% of the population (see Table A5). | The conflation of "upper class" with "service class" can obscure the broader occupational and structural differences captured by the latter. Given that the "service class" in this study represents 42% of the population, referring to it as the "upper class" would misrepresent its scope. For the sake of conceptual precision and consistency, the term “service class” is used throughout the paper instead of “upper-class”. |
| R2.8 | As noted on page 12, Lindh & Andersson use market inequality while the current paper uses GINI post-taxes and transfers. These two are quite different variables and it is unsurprising that they show different results. | I agree, this is a substantial difference. I have downplayed the previous claims in relation to this criticism. I have also chosen an alternative empirical strategy regarding the role of income inequality (post-tax and transfers). |
| R2.9 | Please clarify why GINI post-taxes and transfers are included in the same model as the welfare state index. How should we interpret the effect of GINI conditioned on the welfare state – as market inequality? | This is a relevant point indeed. In principle, income inequality reflects the actual distribution of economic resources within a society. In my original analysis, I control for welfare size—measured through indicators of redistribution, public spending, and tax revenue—as I acknowledge the importance of institutional factors in shaping redistributive preferences. Given this, the coefficient of the Gini index in a model that also includes a measure of redistribution captures the effect of post-redistribution inequality on the outcome, independently of the extent of redistribution itself. It reflects how the resulting levels of inequality, rather than the redistributive process, influence individuals' attitudes.  However, the empirical strategy has now been simplified in order to shed light more directly on the theorization of the moderating role of economic inequality (see Table 2). I hope that this will clarify the theoretical model tested, as well as the relationship between class-based network segregation, social class, economic inequality and redistributive preferences. |
| R2.10 | Cross-class embeddedness is not exactly what the dependent variable estimates, rather, it measures homogeneity and hence whether ties are in your own class or not. This might be a subtle but not unimportant difference. | I understood this comment as referring to the *independent* variable related to social networks and not to the *dependent* variable, redistributive preferences. Indeed, it is true that it does not measure the same. In contrast, the measure of class-based network segregation – measured by network homogeneity, refers to the share of similar or same class network ties in reference to ego’s class position. |
| R2.11 | The motivation for the descriptive part is (p9-10) largely missing. Please describe the methods and purpose of this analysis. In particular, I do not fully understand the role of Figure 4. | Thank you for pointing out this point. I consider it correct and important. For this reason, the methods section now includes an explanation of the objective of the descriptive analysis. |
| R2.12 | The heading of Table 2 does not declare the dependent variable. | In the new version of the Table, I included it in the title. |
| R2.13 | I would prefer if model 2 of table 1 should include the respondent’s social class. | In the new version of Table 1, I have decided to present the results in line with the logic of my first hypothesis. First, the respondent’s social class, and after the interaction of the respondent’s social class with class-based network homogeneity. In this regard, I represent my main interest, which is testing the interaction and not the direct association of class-based network homogeneity and redistributive preferences.  Also, the full model, including the respondent's social class jointly with class-based network homogeneity, is included in Table A1, as suggested by the reviewer. |
| R2.14 | If the authors want to convince the readers of the importance of inequality rather than welfare state size, not only their main effect but also their interactions could be entered in the same model. | This is indeed a very important point. Also, one of the most challenging reviews. According to this, I also use the size of the welfare state as a moderator of the interaction between class-based network segregation and class on redistributive preferences. This can be represented as follows:  **Approach 1:** Preferences ~  Class × Homogeneity × Welfare State (cross-level)  The results show that in countries with a more encompassing welfare state, the conditional relationship between network segregation and class on redistributive preferences tends to widen. This means that in more encompassing welfare states, a more homogeneous working class results in an increase in redistributive preferences. Similarly, in more homogeneous service-class networks, there is a decrease in support for redistribution in the service class. The results indicate that the differences between the service and working classes decrease in the context of high inequality. In contrast, the differences between the working and service classes become wider in countries with a more encompassing welfare state. Additionally, I also considered the following specifications:  **Approach 2:** Preferences ~   Class × Homogeneity × Gini +  Class × Homogeneity × Tax-Revenue (cross-level)  **Approach 3:** Preferences ~   Class × Homogeneity × Gini +  Class × Homogeneity × Gov. Spending (cross-level)  **Approach 4**: Preferences ~  Class × Homogeneity × Gini +  Class × Homogeneity × Redistribution (cross-level)  **Approach 5:** Preferences ~   Class × Homogeneity × Gini +  Class × Homogeneity × Welfare State (cross-level)  Implementing approaches 2 to 5 led to mixed results. First, after including the cross-level interaction with Tax Revenue and Gov. Spending, the main cross-level interaction remained stable, but the coefficients reduced their size and statistical significance. Second, when including country-level Redistribution, the coefficients of the main interaction become non-significant for the working class, but not for the intermediate class. Finally, the main cross-level interaction becomes non-significant when the cross-level interaction for Welfare State Size is included.   As an additional set of supplementary analyses, I conducted a series of power analyses for the main cross-level interaction of Gini, including the cross-level interaction for the size of the welfare state (see Figure S2). |

## **Reviewer 3**

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| **ID** | **Comment** | **Response** |
| R3.1 | This article is very similar to Lindh and Andersson's 2024 ESR, if I'm not mistaken. The difference seems to be a minor variation on measuring class network composition and selecting a few different attitudinal questions. Now, this similarity is not an insurmountable problem, as both Lindh and Andersson 2024 and this paper provide interesting and important findings. But I think that more care needs to be done to explicitly situate what specific value is added by this paper above Lindh and Andersson. Just to reiterate, I think there is value-added, but the authors need to make a bit more of a clearer and stronger case. | Thank you for this comment. Indeed, the work by Lindh and Andersson (2024) represents an important contribution to the field. For this reason, I built on their earlier work in developing my own theoretical framework. At the same time, I argue that my study contributes to two key points:  1) Distinction between class profiles and class-based network homogeneity.  Rather than simply extending traditional class-based mechanisms to network ties, my aim is to explore how ties to individuals of the same class—what I refer to as class-based network homogeneity—shape redistributive preferences. This concept focuses on what it means for individuals of a particular class to predominantly experience their social world through same-class relationships. I emphasize that homogeneity should be understood as a measure of distance from other classes, and argue that this distance operates differently depending on one's class position. In doing so, I attempt to clarify how class-based network segregation may affect political attitudes in class-specific ways, through the interaction of individual class position with class-based network homogeneity.  2) Distinction between country-level redistribution and income inequality (post-tax and transfers).  Another important distinction lies in how I conceptualize the macro-level context. My focus is on realized income inequality—measured after taxes and transfers—rather than on redistribution per se. This allows me to analyze the distributional context in which individuals form political preferences, after the welfare state has already enacted its role. While redistribution and inequality are clearly linked, I treat them as analytically distinct to better capture the contextual effects on individual attitudes. |
| R3.2 | Know / don't know. If I'm not mistaken, how do we differentiate the homogenous from the isolate? If I'm not mistaken, a hermit and a highly social but highly cocooned upper class person will both score as highly homogenous networks, since both will not know a police officer, for example. How can we differentiate these two contributors to the homogenous, or at least be confident that the hermit is not driving main results? | I appreciate this question and fully agree that distinguishing between structurally homogenous networks and true social isolation is critical for interpreting the findings.  To clarify, individuals who reported not knowing anyone in the position generator were excluded from the analysis (approximately 5% of the original sample). These respondents represent the only cases that could be reasonably classified as “isolated” within the context of this instrument. As such, they do not contribute to the estimated effects of network homogeneity in the final models.  Importantly, the models control for network size (i.e., the number of known positions named by each respondent). This allows us to account for the potential influence of smaller networks on the homogeneity index. By including this covariate, we mitigate the concern that highly homogenous networks are merely artifacts of sparse social exposure. In other words, the results reflect variation in homogeneity, not simply size.  Lastly, it is worth noting that the position generator is designed to capture access to a range of occupational positions—typically via *weak* or acquaintance ties—rather than measuring strong emotional bonds or close-knit personal networks (as in name generators) (van der Gaag et al., 2008). Thus, individuals with limited but exclusive ties (e.g., to high-status others) can be meaningfully distinguished from those with no meaningful network reach at all.  Taken together, we believe these design and modeling choices provide sufficient safeguards against the possibility that social isolation is confounding our results on network homogeneity. |
| R3.3 | Relationships - If I'm not mistaken, all forms of knowing in any capacity are coded as known. But are there reasons to wonder whether the kin-based and the much looser, simply know in some capacity, categories might indicate something that the article is not interested in addressing? Perhaps I am extremely homogenous in my middle-class network formation, but my two siblings rose to the ranks of lawyer and ceo, as a silly example. Do I have a heterogenous network in the way that would alter attitudes? Perhaps, but perhaps a bit more justification of collapsing these types of knowing is needed. | In this case, my focus is on individuals' full networks. Existing research on the network–attitude link has primarily examined the role of full networks, typically considering both weak and strong ties simultaneously. While homogeneity may stem predominantly from strong ties, this is not always the case (Völker, 2022). Weak ties, on the other hand, are more likely to facilitate out-group connections (McPherson et al., 2001). However, in this study, I have not hypothesized different effects for strong or weak ties. Theoretically, it would make sense to distinguish between weak and strong ties when analyzing network effects. However, such a distinction extends beyond the scope of this paper and is therefore not included in the micro-level theorization of the hypotheses. Nonetheless, this represents a promising direction for future research. |
| R3.4 | I don't totally understand why the EGP categories are collapsed. EGP class categories don't seem terribly overwhelming. Wouldn't it at least make sense to verify that the patterns of association are similar within the collapsed classes? | This is a very interesting point. Initially, I aligned the classification of individual class position with the three-group structure used in the occupation-based position generator. Following the recommendation, I re-estimated the regression using a six-class categorization. The results remained consistent with those obtained under the three-class EGP scheme, providing similar support for Hypothesis 1. Additionally, I included the main cross-level interaction effect for income inequality to test Hypothesis 2, and the findings were likewise stable across both class categorizations. These additional analyses are presented in the supplementary materials (see Table S4 and Table S5). |

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